

Dear past and future puppy owners,

I loved them first. I thought of you years before you even realized. I planned for and cared about your baby long before you started thinking of adding to your family. I worried about your future with that puppy before you knew there would be one.

There were hours upon hours spent researching lines for the parents of your puppies. Going over breeder after breeder, choosing not only my pet but looking for a dog that will make you your pet. Worrying if you'd be happy, if I had chosen correctly and your puppy would grow up healthy and happy. Going over puppy after puppy with fellow breeders, running over my program with as many knowledgeable breeders as I can, determined to not miss anything. Tracing lines back as far as I could, learning the ins and outs not only for my knowledge but so that I was informed, prepared to go over every detail with you, to answer the questions that sometimes you don't even ask.

Then there's years of watching your puppies parents grow. Loving them and enjoying them as part of my family. Taking them every where I can, training them, socializing them, watching how they fill out. Asking myself I had made the right choice in both of them. Scrutinizing their confirmation, how they move, and their temperament. There was the stress of health testing. Praying not only that my babies were healthy but that they had the genes to make your baby healthy.

Finally came the time to put your puppies parents together. For the next 63 days I worried, I obsessed, I grew excited. I watched your puppies mom like a hawk. Making sure my baby was okay, monitoring her diet better than I do my own. Concerned that she was getting enough of the right nutrients and that your growing baby was getting the best start possible. I spent hours on the couch, floor, and dog bed with her watching her tummy grow and anxiously waiting. As your baby and mine grew I laid my hands on her tummy and felt the first movements of your puppy. As the time grew close I spent most nights in the nursery with her. Making sure she didn't go into labor without me knowing, in case something went wrong and one of our babies needed help. When labor started my whole life stopped. I spent every second with her. Your baby was born into my hands and I held my breath as I cleaned them up, watching for movement and breathing, cleaning them up, checking them over, and wondering if you'd love them as much as I already did. I helped your babies brother when mom got tired and he was stuck. I cried when your babies sister didn't make it.

For the first 8 weeks most of my life was filled with your baby. Watching them grow and making sure I was doing everything possible to make sure they started their lives the right way. Making sure each one was getting enough to eat, enough socialization time, that they were dewormed and given their shots. I was the first person they saw when they opened their eyes. I spent my weeks playing with them and keeping them safe.

I searched for you and interviewed you. As you spoke I tried to read your character. Would you love them as much as I do? Would you bring them in as part of your family? Would you care for this tiny life that I brought into this world that I am responsible for? Some of you were turned away but some of you were welcomed into our family. The day you took your baby home was harder than I'd ever let on. I was excited for you but I was also terrified. Had I chosen correctly? Were you who you seemed to be?

My love and worry didn't end there. I thought about your baby regularly, saddened when I didn't get updates, ecstatic when I did. I hoped you were caring for your baby the way I care for mine. I answered your questions happily and answered them again just as happily to your babies siblings new parents. When your puppies sister ate a couch I stayed up that night she was at the vets, waiting to hear that she was okay. When their brothers parents decided he no longer fit in their life I welcomed him home, sorry that I had chosen wrong for him and promised him it wouldn't happen again.

I loved your baby first and I will never stop.

~Author Unknown